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BALDWIN IN A CLASS BY ITSELF

SWARING UNHEARD OF, DRINKING BARRED, AND SMOKING SELDOM INDULGED IN.

MANY OLD PREACHERS

MORE SUPERANNUED MINISTERS IN BALDWIN THAN IN ANY OTHER CITY.

Baldwin, Kan., the home of Baker University, the big Methodist school of the west, is in a class all by itself. There is no other town in the state like it.

Baldwin looks the way and sound not only of the college and its students, but of the business interests as well. Talk with the Baldwin banker, teacher, druggist or everyman for five minutes and he will say something about the religious spirit that pervades the town and he speaks of it in a friendly way, too. He seems to take a great pride in it. The spirit of the people is so entirely different from that of the other towns that it is very noticeable as well as refreshing.

Once upon a time Baldwin had a commercial club, run on the same lines as such clubs are run in other towns. It failed in its purpose. The business men say it was due to the lack of true Baldwin spirit, which being interpreted means that it lacked the thread of religion in its fabric.

Another club has now arisen on the lines of the commercial club and it is accomplishing all sorts of things in town development. It is the Methodist Brotherhood. When someone thinks of a scheme that will help the town he presents it to the Methodist Brotherhood, which gives it consideration. If it is approved, then the brotherhood gets behind and pushes with all the vim of the Kansas City Commercial club. If the brotherhood disapproves it the scheme is dropped.

Every business man in the town belongs to the brotherhood and all take great interest in the club and its work. The brotherhood meets once a month and all business houses close, except the drug store, so that the proprietors and clerks can attend the meeting. The brotherhood aroused interest in municipal improvements until the town now has a complete sewer system, electric lights and waterworks.

It is working on a Fourth of July celebration at present, and a farewell reception to Dr. Martin, retiring president of Baker. These things are cited simply to show the wide scope of its work.

A stranger is soon impressed with the seeming sociability of the town. For instance, the hotel will not take cigars in stock for its customers. The proprietor doesn't believe in smoking. One druggist keeps cigars, the only ones in town. A stranger notes if that the cigar case was rather empty and asked about it.

"Oh, we had quite a run last week," said the druggist, "and I haven't got around to ordering any more. For many years it is said, it was impossible to buy a cigar in the town."

Methodists Supreme.

Methodists own and run Baldwin, the Presbyterians have a slight foothold in one of the suburbs, and the Catholics have a church with a dozen or so members over near the railroad. But it is hard shooting for both anti-Methodist institutions. Some years ago a Topeka Presbyterian opened a bank there, but he sold out later. He said that Baldwin was no place for a Presbyterian to try to do business in.

Perhaps more superannuated preachers live in Baldwin than in any other city of its size in the world. They flock there to spend their last days, as the spirit of the town just suits them. It is also a great place for retired farmers with religious tendencies. Parents move there from all sections of the country in order to get the effect of the spirit upon their children during the period of character forming.

A person can walk the streets for six months and haunt every public place, even the livery stable, without hearing an oath uttered.

Baker university has about 500 students. This makes Baldwin a lively, though solemn, town during the school term. Three or four young men students were discussing their studies and the coming commencement exercises on the hotel veranda the other night. A stranger began to quiz them about the town and its peculiarities.

"Isn't it rather dull here in the summer, when the students are away?" he asked.

"It usually gets pretty dull," remarked one of the young men in great earnestness. "But the town is going to be lively, all right, this summer."

"What's going on?" he was asked.

"Oh, the brotherhood is arranging for a Fourth of July celebration. And besides that the Epworth league is to hold its convention here one week."

However, there is always something going on in Baldwin in a church way, and that is what the people enjoy. A good lecturer or preacher can draw a big audience any time. Theatrical outfits, especially musical comedies, could not draw a corporal's guard. In fact, they are not wanted. Baldwin doesn't believe in frivolities nor any funny business. Tom McNeal of Topeka once made a speech there and referred to Baker as "a preacher factory." He shocked the people.

Crime is a thing almost unknown in the town. Most people never lock their doors at night. A bootlegger can find no customers there. Once upon a time the town was scandalized when it learned that some of the college boys were drinking sweet cider.—New York Times.

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